

Invention: Linear Motion Ad and Partition Panel

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4 Claims, 4 Drawing Sheets

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Field of the Invention

The present invention relates to a mechanical device and system developed for the purpose of expediting the checkout process through separation of orders at the checkout counter. Said device also serves as a medium for the advertisement of various products and services.

2. Description of the Related Art

The prior art consists of various forms of elongated plastic blocks commonly known as “order dividers.” These blocks are physically placed between orders, in an effort to separate them on the checkout counter. However, since these dividers are not a permanent fixture of the checkout counter, they have a tendency to become lost or misplaced.

Their universally small surface area, also makes for a far less effective medium for advertising. And, because they divide orders along a low horizontal rather than a high vertical plane, the separation is far less discernible than that created by the present invention.

Unlike the present invention, the prior art is void of any mechanical properties, which would allow it to address these and other concerns.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention is directed to a technique and system to more effectively divide customer orders at the checkout counter. This invention serves to better expedite the checkout process, while also creating a more effective medium for advertising various products and services. Both innovations address and overcome the issues and problems existing in prior art, as previously outlined.

Unlike prior art, the present invention is a true mechanical device, composed of numerous moving parts, in order to perform its tasks.

Permanently mounted to the checkout counter, these mechanical properties allows the present invention to separate customer orders along a more discernible vertical axis, by way of a sliding partition panel, suspended from a turret.

The greater surface area of the partition panel of said invention, provides a larger format over prior art, upon which various products and services may be more effectively advertised.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a semi-overhead view of the left side of the present invention prior to activation at the checkout counter (not depicted in drawing).

FIG. 2 illustrates the present invention as the turret **5** facilitates the partition panel **1** to rotate and lock at a 90-degree angle across the checkout counter (not depicted in drawing).

FIG. 3 depicts the partition panel **1**, consisting of the panel frame **3** and panel hatch **2**, positioned at a 90-degree vertical angle, as part of the range of motion to return said panel to its original position of **FIG. 1**.

This range of motion is made possible by way of the panel hinge **4** attached to the turret **5** mounted on the turret base **6**. The turret base **6** is positioned on the travel rail **7** whereby end stops **9** prevent the unit from sliding beyond the linear limits of the travel rail **7**.

FIG. 4 illustrates the panel frame hatch **2** in the open position, allowing easy access of promotional material to be inserted on either side of the partition panel **1**, where they are held securely in place by the panel frame **3**.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF INVENTION

FIG. 1 illustrates a preferred embodiment of the present invention. Said invention is a mechanically operated rail mounted vertically suspended partition panel, designed to separate customer orders at supermarket checkout counters and similar retail environments.

This invention allows customers to position their purchases on the checkout counter without fear of mixing or merging with the previous customer's order. Said invention further serves to minimize confusion, while facilitating the checkout process, by allowing customers to more quickly position their purchases for checkout.

FIG. 2 illustrates the vertical barrier created to separate purchases when the partition panel 1, is moved into position. It is important to note that this suspended vertical barrier of the present invention, is a far more discernible separation than the horizontal hump separation of various elongated blocks placed on the counter, from prior art.

The unit FIG. 1, is activated by laterally rotating the partition panel 1, out over the checkout counter (not depicted in drawing) until it locks at a 90-degree angle as illustrated in FIG. 2. This position serves to separate one order from the next. Movement of the checkout counter conveyer belt, (not depicted in drawing) propels items against the partition panel 1 – FIG. 2, thereby causing the unit to advance along with the purchases to within reach of the cashier, to be electronically scanned. The cashier then lifts and rotates the panel FIG. 3 back into position FIG. 1 for the next shopper.

The stability and directional path of the unit is provided by the travel rail 7, which is attached to the inside railing of the checkout counter 8. End stops 9, prevent the unit from

moving beyond the limits of the travel rail 7.

The unit is mounted onto the travel rail 7, by way of the turret base 6, which houses metal bearings to facilitate movement. The 90-degree lateral movement of the partition panel 1, is accomplished through the turret 5.

The panel hinge 4, allows for any up and down movements FIG. 3, of the partition panel 1, required to maneuver said panel in or out of position as needed.

In addition to performing the practical function of separating orders at the checkout counter, this invention also serves as an oversized eye-catching medium for advertising. It should be noted that advertising on prior art has been limited to crammed surfaces, on what amounts to elongated blocks used to separate orders at the checkout counter.

The present invention provides over twice the advertising space on its partition panel 1, vertically suspended from the turret 5, like a miniature billboard.

The partition panel hatch 2 – FIG. 4 allows for easy loading of ad materials on either side of the partition panel 1, which are held securely in place by the partition panel frame 3.